

# Father Aristede Red of St. John's Episcopal, sees America hurt by disintegration of families

Father Aristede S. Red, priest at St. John's Episcopal Church, Marietta, has an unusual combination of professions; he is a minister and, at the same time, a dentist.

In addition to being pastor at St. John's, he is also Director of Community Dental Services, Department of Health of the State of Pennsylvania. Every weekday, Father Red commutes to his dental position in Harrisburg. What his job entails is supervision of fluoridation of water supplies.

For 22 years before taking his job with the state, Father/Doctor Red was in private dental practice in Harrisburg and Mechanicsburg.

How Father Red became a priest and how Doctor Red became a dentist is a long story.

The story begins in Harrisburg where Aristede Red was raised in a Greek family which attended the Episcopal Church, because there was no Greek Orthodox Church in Harrisburg, and because the Episcopal Church belongs to the same communion as the Greek Orthodox Church.

During World War II Aristede was 1st Lieutenant Red in combat with the artillery of the 104th Infantry Division ("Timberwolf"). Lieutenant Red saw 195 days of combat in Europe. He fought in Fance, Belgium, Holland. From Aachen he then went with the U.S. armies into Germany to meet the Russians at the end of the European war.

Lieutenant Red's father, an immigrant from Greece, was very proud to have all three of his sons fighting as officers with the American forces.

One of the brothers was subsequently killed as a Navy pilot in the Korean War. The other brother retired after a career in the Army and is now comptroller of the Savannah, Georgia, School District. Last week when hurricane David hit Georgia hard, electricity was out for several days. Father Red found it impossible to put through a phone call to his brother.

During the thick of fighting in World War II it was difficult to hold worship services, but Lieutenant Red's Chaplain did hold services whenever there was

a lull in the fighting. Lt. Red's chaplain told him that he ought to think seriously about entering the ministry.

For awhile, Lt. Red was fighting alongside British and Canadian troops who needed ground cover. He worshipped with them, and most of them, of course, were Anglicans.

At the end of the war Lt. Red studied at the University of Dijon in France. There he associated closely with another officer who was a dentist. He visited dental clinics with his friend. He began to think, "This is something I would like to do the rest of my life."

Back in the states he attended the University of Nebraska, then the dental school at the University of Pennsylvania.

He went to Nebraska because his wife, the former Dorothea Bernemeier was from Nebraska. He met her and married her during the war before going overseas. The Reds have three children: Sam, an expert in large machinery; Sharon, whose husband Robert Wood is a coach, teacher, and tennis player in Grosse Point, and Dennis, who is a dental student.

While practicing dentistry Dr. Red continued to be very active in the church. He became a lay reader. "Why don't you study to become a deacon?" he was asked.

He studied 7 years, and was then ordained as a deacon. His old Army chaplain preached at his ordination.

For 16 years Dr. Red was a deacon, serving mainly at the Harrisburg cathedral. "I didn't think I'd go any farther," he says. He also served the parish at Milton, Pa.

He gave up his private practice of dentistry to head the program in dental hygiene at Williamsport Community College, but when federal funds for instituting that program were withdrawn he took a position with the state health department.

Meanwhile, his bishop told him, "You're a perpetual deacon. We'd like to have you as a priest in the church."

In 1972 he was ordained as a priest.

In 1973 he came to St. John's in Marietta.

Father Red has strong feelings about the church and its relation to people.



Father Aristede S. Red

"Probably the greatest weakness of the church today is that people don't live the faith they learn in church. People don't act the same way in church and out."

He pointed out that some Americans are worried about a few thousand Russian troops stationed in Cuba, but, he says, "We should be more worried about what is going on in our own country, the way our family life is disintegrating. Couples are living together openly without being married."

"When you break down the family unit, everybody becomes his own boss. You have no more organization, when you break down the unit that God Himself nurtured."

"He always, even when dying on the cross, looked after His mother. To John, He said, 'Behold thy mother.'"

"We don't have to wait for the Russians to send a bomb in here—we're doing a fine job on ourselves."

Father Red is also disturbed by the large number of people who have no attachment to any organized religious group. "This creates a generation of people who have never been taught and given an attitude to what is a moral way in life. They are going to give rise to a new

generation that is even further away from the church."

Despite all the reason for gloom, Father Red does not feel that "all is lost." "The church has known low ebbs in its history."

He remarked about how strong the church was during wartime. "As Lincoln said, 'When I have nowhere else to go, I fall to my knees.'"

During the war, parents went to church to pray for their children. "There are no atheists in foxholes."

In believing that people should live their religion, Father Red gives the Jews as an example, and specifically the character, Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Father Red sang in *Fiddler* and had plenty of occasion to observe Tevye conversing with God throughout the day.

"We dress up for Sunday to go to church. It's like putting on a uniform to work at Sico."

Father Red feels religion should penetrate to every phase of life. "The Book of Common Prayer takes care of everything from birth to death, and thereafter, events—catastrophes or times of rejoicing...It covers your whole life...A man can worship every day with this book. The Matins, give you a comfortable way to begin each day."

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The Carnival starts at 6:00 PM on Friday and Saturday evenings. Don't miss it.